

To the Ends of the Earth

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Summary: The horrrendous assault of mother Earth is seen in a new light as we view the invasion through the eyes of office worker Morgan Fischer. Can he survive?

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Prologue: "Recipe for disaster"

It is 2552, and Humanity is at war with a coalition of aliens known as "the covenant." The war has been raging for decades, and ever since the first contact, man has gradually lost his grip on the galaxy. Now the last of humanities colonies has been wiped out, the covenant turn their attention to the final outpost of the species; mother Earth. The location of Earth is a closely guarded secret, but its inhabitants know that someday the covenant will come, and their world will fall.

Chapter 1: "Don't Panic"

Morgan threw open the curtains, bathing the penthouse in glorious orange light. It was early morning, and the sun could be seen steadily rising above New Mombasa city centre. Morgan stood for a moment, admiring his expensive view. He looked down on the heaving city streets; countless anonymous travellers passed, hundreds of feet below. He looked at them at first with contempt at their sad way of life, but then his gaze turned towards the sky, and a sense of pride for the human race began to beat within him. His mind was suddenly beset with thoughts of the war. He knew, of course, that the UNSC were doing everything they could to keep the edge against the animal hordes, but he couldn't explain why his stomach turned whenever he saw the stars. We're winning, aren't we? A flicker of doubt flashed across his face before he said to himself, firmly,

"There's nothing to worry about Morgan, how could a bunch of barbaric

freaks possibly get past the G.D.S?"

Turning around; he made his way to the bathroom, past the crumpled bed sheets and into the awaiting hygiene unit. A faint humming sound preceded a large buzzing sound as a sheet of blue light flashed into life above his head. This sheet gradually made its way down Morgan's body, scanning for even a slight change in his body chemistry.

"Good morning Morgan!" declared his personal AI; Jennifer, in a sickeningly pleasant voice. "And how are you today?" He could have answered truthfully, but he didn't.

"I'm feeling great this morning Jen, how's my bioscan looking?" In reality he still hadn't gotten used to his cerebral implants; every morning he jumped out of his skin whenever Jennifer decided to pop into his head. That's why she was only activated at home; he wouldn't let her distract him at work.

"Well," pondered Jen "your hair needs a trim, you need a shave, you are dehydrated, hungry, in serious need of vitamins, your heart rate is way above average, your blood pressure is slightly above average, you seem stressed, Morgan. Is there anything I can do to...?"

"Just, stop asking. I'm fine"

Morgan stood idly in the cold cubicle for what seemed like forever while Jennifer cleaned and pruned and perfected until he stepped out looking like a very rich man. He then dressed, putting on his favourite suit and thousand dollar black Nike shoes. Straightening his tie unnecessarily, he strolled confidently out of his apartment.

Chapter 2: "If your life preserver should fail to openâ€|"

The gleaming Audi A10 came to a slow halt, its gentle hum dying down softly. The door slid back with a hiss and Morgan stepped out. His eyes slowly travelled upwards, scaling the gigantic office building. He took a large breath and a smile crept across his face, he loved his business (Icono corp.) more than anything in the world, and swore he would do anything to stop it going under. As he marched into the front lobby he thought back to his teenage years, back when he was a young entrepreneur. Back then he was buying and selling warehouse goods; water, hydrogen, anything that would make a profit. He recalled something his father had said one day;

"Son, you want to be a failure all your life? Sure you don't, join the damn marines!" himself an UNSC veteran, he had been present at the first contact with the covenant, losing a leg and gaining a severe glory complex. Since he got back he was determined that when he had a son, he would train him for the army and regain his honour. Morgan had been taken to countless gun courses and boot camps in his early teens, but he always seemed to prefer "real work". His father would often find him selling drinks on the street corner, plastic warthogs lying discarded on the grass. Morgan just figured that he wasn't a fighter. As the glass elevator clunked into life, Morgan snapped back to reality. He peered into the passing office floors, and said in self-confirmation,

"I am not a failure."

As he straightened up he glanced to the monitor in the corner, a newsreader looked worried but nonetheless collected as she mouthed silently at the camera. Why is the volume always muted on these things? He thought to himself. Morgan strained upwards and clicked it up a few units.

"â€|and despite the recent increase by the UNSC from defcon 4 to defcon 5, press offices worldwide are still giving a firm 'no comment'â€|" Morgan's wistful smile turned into a grave look of concern. The elevator doors had opened. Making his way down the corridor Morgan ran through one thousand scenarios in his head. The only conclusion that he could draw was that the UNSC are now concerned that a covenant attack is imminent. Even so, he figured that all this added awareness was no bad thing. After all, if the MAC guns are on permanent alert then there's absolutely no chance the covenant can get close to the surface, he thought anxiously. His father's voice echoed inside his troubled brain.

"They're merciless killers, Morgan. And sitting in a leather chair all day ain't gonna slow 'em down." Morgan sat in his office, in his leather chair. He suddenly realised how defcon 5 would impact him and his business.

"Yes!" he exclaimed. He looked at the holo-monitor in the centre of his table, watching stock prices plummet as foolhardy individuals desperately sold themselves out. They obviously thought this was the end of the world, trying to sell all they had, while they still could. Morgan chuckled to him self, quickly re-asserting before he called his secretary.

"Call. Secretary. S Templar." An archaic ringing tone resounded throughout the room, eventually halted by a female voice.

"Good morning Mr. Fischer, what's up?"

"Sarah, check the market right now."

"Okay... what's the matter?" She sounded confused.

"Nothing's the matter just take a little look at that market!" Morgan waited patiently, a fat grin on his once tired face.

"â€|Oh em gee Morgan, what do you want me to do?"

"Call everyone; tell them to get on this right away. Were gonna own this market today, in more ways than one. Call terminated."

Morgan spun around enthusiastically in his chair, dizzying him self. When he came to a stop he was facing the floor to ceiling window that walled his grand office. The morning suns were as beautiful as ever. He spun back around and turned the holo-panel on to CNN.

As he sunk down into his chair he thought about the sky he had just seen. He slowly turned back around to face the window. There were two suns. Or, at least what looked like a second sun, to the west. He leant forward as if to deliberate this occurrence as the newsreader began to speak in a solemn voice.

"We have just received conformation that the UNSC MAC station 'Malta' has been destroyed. Well..." The newsreader paused; Morgan's eyes

were fixed on the westward light. "Seemingly obliterated in fact, by what experts are calling 'some sort of antimass explosion.'"

### Chapter 3: "Please keep arms and legs inside the vehicle"

Morgan's face turned pale. His stomach flipped and his brain was in civil war, one half telling him that the covenant were coming, the other convinced that the explosion was an accident. Either way he concluded that Earth's defence prospects were significantly hampered. He paced the office, his thumb and forefinger stroking his chiselled jaw.

"Crap." He concluded. He returned tentatively to the window and had to take a step back when he saw that three more such lights had appeared, two on the red horizon and one in the middle of the yellowed sky. He felt light headed and his legs were feeling like mush.

He collapsed back down at his desk, checking over his shoulder every few seconds or so. His focus slowly returned to the Newscast, where the usual flashy 3D menus had been replaced by a rather old-looking flat screen, with the words "PLEASE STAY TUNED FOR A PUBLIC INFORMATION BROADCAST" displayed in black. All of a sudden, a man appeared on the screen. He was stood next to a blackboard and was dressed in old-looking clothing. Morgan assumed that this was some sort of pre-recorded message "put together years ago in the event that the covenant ever reached earth. He now understood, his heart in his throat. There was now no doubt that an invasion was in progress, what could he do? This train of thought was promptly de-railed as the man in brown began to speak. Morgan thought he heard the low popping sound of an explosion, but he dismissed it as dodgy bass on this god-awful recording.

"Please do not panic. This is a public information broadcast" the foreboding man spoke, in a smart sounding new-England accent, "As you are no doubt aware, Earth has been fighting the covenant for many years. We knew that a strike on our mother earth was inevitable, and this day it has finally come. Therefore we advise you to stay in your homes while our military response can dispel the attempted invasion. Again, please stay calm; if you are inconveniently far away from your home, or if your home is inaccessible please seek familiar shelter, as you may need to remain there for some time. For this reason please gather as many supplies as possible, and ration them as required. If at anytime you feel that a strike on your home is imminent then you may want to construct a protective unit within a ground floor room. Suitable materials include: mattresses, sheets, tables, chairs..."

Morgan had had enough of these patronising instructions. They had been recording the same basic message for centuries, apparently, and he already knew his whole speech as soon as he had begun. Nonetheless, he decided to remain in his office for the time being, as the nice man on the panel had asked him to.

The man continued to drone on as Morgan looked down onto the city streets, still countless anonymous travellers continued to pass, hundreds of feet below. Although this time they were moving much faster. Strangely, the mob slowed to an eventual stop, and Morgan began to see hundreds of heads turned upwards, apparently towards

him. He too, looked upwards, and was met with a blue-white light high in the sky. He couldn't see all of it, his ceiling was blocking part of the explosion, but it appeared to be almost directly above New Mombasa, and was considerably closer and brighter than the other lights.

A peculiar thought struck him; is this a sign? Should I get out there and do something? At that moment the sound hit. An almighty BOOM lashed against the Earth. Morgan recoiled from the shaking window, and no sooner had he opened his eyes again, he heard yet another mighty tremor. They all seemed to be coming from the west side of town. He leaned against his window and looked as westwards as he could, but all he could see was plumes of smoke drifting happily around the edge of his building. Another blast forced him back from the vibrating glass.

Morgan took a desperate look at what he could see, and a piercing sound filled his head. His eyes searched the city for the source of this strange noise. He noticed what could only be described as a rippling blue sphere, about the size of an elephant slowly arcing low across the sky, from right to left. This sphere left a shimmering trail of blue flame behind it, it was almost beautiful. Before he could get a chance to truly examine this marvel, the ball began to descend. Morgan watched it, horrified as it smashed its way into an office complex across the street. Smash wasn't the word, it melted into the stone wall. Morgan stood motionless for a moment, then just as he was about to look away, the middle of the office building exploded outwards in deadly blue flame. The upper section was propelled upwards by a few feet; there it hung in space for a fraction of a second before destiny took hold, the upper section collapsed into the lower and the sorry construction crumbled to the ground. The almighty shockwave from the blast could be seen in all directions. Morgan turned his head and sure enough, the shockwave reached the Icono building. His window shattered instantly, scattering shards of glass all over what was once his office. It had become his sanctuary, but Morgan knew that it would be his tomb if he stayed put. Yet again the screeching sound filled the air, this time louder than before. Morgan raised his hands to his ears and started to walk out of the room, he had decided: I'm going outside.

#### Chapter 4: "Welcome to boot camp"

He met Sarah in the hallway, who looked even more confused now she was in the middle of an alien invasion.

"I made all those calls sir, what now?" she inquired, with no hint of sarcasm.

"I'm getting out of here" He said, matter-of-factly.

"Why? It's only 11am..." Again, with no hint of sarcasm.

"We've got to get out of this building, unless you want to die"

"Huh?"

"Just, come with me." Morgan grasped Sarah's hand and dragged her towards the elevator; he told her what he had seen and with each step her look of confusion slowly turned to a look of panic. They leaped

into the waiting elevator and Morgan spun around, hitting the ground floor button. He turned slowly back around to face out of the building, out onto the west side of the city. What he saw was utter chaos. He looked at Sarah, who had her hand on her mouth and was shaking her head. Her eyes were wide open, almost as if she were trying to take as much of the nightmare as she could.

There was a single covenant ship hanging over the entire west quarter. It was the biggest spaceship Morgan had ever seen; it cast a gigantic shadow on the underlying district, a shadow black with impending doom. The ship itself was a heavenly white, and a purplish column of light could be seen connecting the ship to the ground below; a gravity lift. Morgan had heard about these from his father. Apparently they could ferry troops, equipment and supplies to and from the surface, using some sort of gravity repulsion technology; the same technology that kept the ship hanging ominously in the sky.

There was fire everywhere, and black smoke billowed and belched upwards. Morgan could see cars abandoned on the highway, some wrecked beyond comprehension and others eerily unharmed.

As the elevator came to a stop, Morgan looked out into the lobby. He was not surprised to see that it was completely deserted; papers left scattered on the floor and panels left running applications. Sarah suddenly spoke.

"I need to see Luke."

"Luke?" Morgan turned to face her, puzzled.

"Yeah my boyfriend, I have to get to him". Sarah's voice was weak and fragile.

"You have a \_boyfriend\_?" Morgan replied, a little too quickly. He took a look at her and wondered why he had ever assumed she was single. Wishful thinking, he supposed.

"Yeah, we live just a couple of blocks away. Don't worry Mr. Fischer, you don't have to come with me I'll be fine." Sarah seemed quite adamant that she would go alone.

"I can't just leave you to get killed Sarah..." Morgan pleaded.

"Look, Morgan, Sir, there's a transline just outside. I only need to ride it for like two minutes and im there" She explained. They were at the front doors.

"Ok fine, just be quick about it. You'll probably be safer at home anyway." Morgan concluded.

They stepped out onto the highway, and Sarah hugged Morgan before saying her goodbyes and rushing into the nearby trans-station. What now? Morgan thought to himself. What does one do in an alien invasion? He thought back to all those videogames his dad bought for him when he was a kid. In those you had health packs and auto-aim. Morgan assumed real war was somewhat different.

Without warning Morgan felt a cataclysmic shudder. Again. Again the

highway trembled. He looked down the highway to his left and his heart skipped a beat. He saw, in what he later recounted as the second most surreal moment of his life, a hulking behemoth fifty feet high lurking several hundred yards down the road. This thing had four legs and somewhat resembled an insect, it was obviously robotic, and was obviously covenant. It was purplish, apparently the 'in colour' for the covenant right now and had a 'head' of sorts, which sort of looked like a laser cannon. Morgan gave it the benefit of the doubt and assumed that it was a laser cannon. All of these observations drew him to a single conclusion; run.

Just as Morgan turned around to start running he saw, at the other end of the highway, three pelican dropships flying in formation \_directly towards the death machine\_.

They're coming to save me! He thought hopefully, his eyes followed them as they flew directly over his head. The back of each of the dropships were open, exposing its terrified crew. Stood on the lip of the ramp of the middle dropship, Morgan saw an armoured figure, statue-like, unmoving despite the rocking of the craft.

Morgan's eyes were quickly drawn away by a large green light pulsating around the 'head' of the machine, and was quietly smug that he had identified its true purpose. His haughty expression quickly changed when he saw what the cannon could do. A green beam ten foot wide poured out of the awful machine's 'eye', ripping right through a pelican. The beam maliciously followed the wrecked aircraft to the ground. Morgan could barely get a good look at the charred mess before he spotted another doomed pelican hit by an anti-air gun on the beast's back. Red plasma tore through the dropships main section, riddling it with holes. Like sardines in a can, Morgan felt like crying. He fell to his knees as he watched the final lucky dropship escape.

Behind him he heard engines drawing closer, eventually he could hear them almost directly behind him, unmoving. Then a voice spoke.

"Son, do ya' mind getting outta my goddamn way, some of us have got an invasion to repel." Morgan looked around. Four navy warthogs were idling behind him, three without passengers.

At the head of the pack was a more largely occupied hog, with a scowling gunner and what looked like a very important man sitting in the passenger seat. He spoke again.

"Do you understand English, boy? Or am I gonna have move you myself?" He spoke with a Texan accent, and looked like he meant business.

"I want to help." Offered Morgan, cautiously.

"Well you can help by moving off the roadâ€|" The officer retaliated.

"No, I mean, I want to help fight the war" Morgan's voice was stronger now; the officer could tell he had a definite conviction within him.

"Well I could use a gunner; you got any experience with firearms son?" The officer was doubtful.

"Well, yeah quite a lot actually. But I've never been in the army or had any proper trainingâ€|" Morgan trailed off.

"Well take your pick of hogs there and make yourself comfortable. Welcome to boot camp."

Chapter 5: "Like father, like son."

The wind rushed through Morgan's hair as the convoy of warthogs sped along highway 56. He flexed his fingers over the grips of the machine gun, and felt its power travel up his arms. He bobbed up and down as the hog rode over bumps and debris, feeling safe for the first time in hours. What had now been identified to him as "The Scarab" had long gone, towards the city centre. Who knew how many lives it had eradicated since last he saw it? A bridge passed over him and the driver took a right off the highway; they were in the residential district. Morgan looked up and saw the tail of the huge capital ship above him. He leant forward to ask the driver where they were headed, as he went to do so, he turned around and shouted in his ear.

"CONTACT!" Morgan jumped back into position and made sure his helmet was still on. He looked left and right, squinting in shop windows. Suddenly the warthog began to accelerate; Morgan was taken by surprise. As he recovered he looked ahead and finally saw it. A creature was stood in the middle of the road, It looked like a gorilla; eight feet tall it was hunched down readying its weapon. It had grey-brown fur, silver body armour and was roaring some sort of battle cry. Morgan heaved his gun into position, his thumb nestled on the bright red fire button. He felt the stream of air billow against his face as he depressed his thumb to fire... CRUNCH. The Driver had rammed the monster head on. It lay still on the bonnet; Morgan could see one of the hog's trademark horns poking through the creatures back. This lethal spike was covered in blue-black blood. The officer made a cutting motion with his hand from his vehicle. The convoy decelerated and came to a stop. Stepping out of the warthog, the driver kicked one of the brute's dangling legs.

"Son of a bitch messed up my car" Complained the soldier.

"Shut up your whining, corporal. We don't need these rust buckets anymore; we're going for a walk. Get the guns" The officer grinned.

"But Captainâ€|" Moaned one weary soldier.

"But nothing Private, get yourself a battle rifle and fall in" The captain pulled out two SMGs from their holsters and loaded them up. He motioned for Morgan to follow the others.

The corporal came back dragging a heavy looking metal box out from the underside of a warthog. Morgan watched him pop it open, upon lifting the lid he revealed six battle rifles, along with a cache of ammunition underneath.

"Guess Christmas came early today huh fellas," said the corporal. The squad helped themselves to guns and ammo, Morgan stepped forward and lifted his weapon. He naturally pulled the gun to his chest, tilting his head and closing his left eye.

He was 17, shooting cardboard elites at the local gun store. Back then the covenant were nothing more than a novelty; he remembered his dad offering to make various targets for practice. He had shot hundreds of pictures of grunts, jackals and elites over the passing months. He even remembered a time when his father had shut himself in the garage, eventually coming out with a full scale cardboard hunter. Morgan had shot it to pieces regardless.

Like riding a bike, Morgan grabbed a magazine and pushed it into the empty slot. The cold metal slid into the housing, clicking as it locked into position. He then turned the rifle on its side and pulled the eject lever backwards, loading the first bullet.

He was ready.

He had introduced himself to the rest of the squad; they knew him only as Fischer. As they walked Morgan tried to remember the names of his comrades. The Private was called Kaparzow; there was also Corporal Hart, Corporal Jennings, Sergeant Velazquez, Staff Sergeant Miller and Captain Ash. He smiled with content at his powers of recollection.

The smell of ash and smoke filled his nostrils as Morgan marched through town. Distant gunfire and crackling embers resounded through his head. The sound of gunfire seemed to grow louder and louder. Morgan could hear screaming. He must be going insane, he thought. This is what war does to people; it destroys everything, even the mind. As his squad of seven rounded the corner he saw a scared looking soldier, gunfire screeching over his head. There were bodies all over the floor; red puddles seeped into the sandy ground.

"I need backup, NOW, I repeat I need backup!" The single solder was sat with his back to a wrecked car, screaming into his helmet.

"Hey I just got this message over the radio," exclaimed Jennings "some guy needs backup" Jennings hadn't yet made the connection.

"Corporal Jennings," barked the Captain. "'Some guy' is yelling his ass off over there" The Captain said with a tired voice. Jennings' eyes lit up.

"Sir, permission to propose something sir," said Jennings confidently.

"Enlighten us Corporal" Droned the Captain.

"Well, seems to me like, that guy, sir, is the same guy that we heard over the radio, sir."

The squad let out a unanimous sigh. Morgan, in order to appear more soldier-like, sighed with them.

The captain tutted and gave his orders. Morgan was to take the left flank along the alleyway, along with Velazquez and Kaparzow. Meanwhile the captain would lay down covering fire along the centre of the road. Sergeant Miller would check the pinned down soldier for wounds, while Hart and Jennings would act as recon on the roof of a nearby hotel.

"Let's get to it marines! C'mon and show these split lip bastards who they're dealing with!"

"HOO RAH" shouted the squad as they dispersed.

#### Chapter 6: "Tango Delta"

Morgan poked his gun out around the corner. He was breathing heavily; his heart felt like it was going to explode out of his chest. He peered through the video sight.

"What do you see? Hart told me she saw a grunt on a shade, 12 o' clock low, from her position," mentioned Kaparzow, eagerly.

"Yeah I see him," replied Morgan. He moved the rifle onto his left shoulder, an awkward firing position but nonetheless he managed to twist the crosshairs onto his target. He aimed at the grunts deformed head; he could clearly see its methane apparatus strapped across its concealed mouth. This would be a difficult shot, as the grunt was being thrown back half a foot twice a second while he was sat in the firing position of the mounted plasma shade. He decided to fire a burst, hopefully catching the grunt on the forward stroke. His index finger curled onto the trigger. He squeezed back gently, waiting for the hammer to release. The battle rifle kicked backwards, and the grunt's mouth exploded in a purple shower. It fell backwards off the shade in surprise, hitting the ground hard. The grunt put its fat hands to its face, feeling for its methane mask. It had been blown clean off along with its lower jaw. The desperate scrabbling gradually slowed down until the creature lay still, and silence roared forth.

"Well done Private Fischer, have a promotion" Said Captain Ash over the radio, in a surprised voice.

"Th-thank you sir" Morgan was trembling. He exhaled, but his breath came in shudders.

As he looked at the sticky mess he wondered what had come of Sarah and her boyfriend, but he just kept seeing her dead. He decided to put her past him, they had gone her separate ways and she was no longer his responsibility.

He had let her go, he had let her die.

"So where exactly are we going Captain?" asked Hart, as she returned from the roof.

"Well Corporal we're on our way to regroup with Sergeant Johnson, and the Master Chiefâ€|" Ash was interrupted by Jennings.

"You mean the Mark IV sir!" Jennings looked ready to soil himself he was so excited.

"Of course Jenningsâ€| how many other Master Chief's do you know?" Said Hart, rolling her eyes.

Morgan wondered what they were talking about, but he daren't ask. He thought back to the green figure he had seen in the dropshipâ€|

"Let's move out people!" Bellowed the Captain. Morgan fell back in line and the squad pressed on.

After a few minutes everybody looked paranoid. The street was quiet almost too quiet. Almost.

"Look OUT!" Shouted a terrified soldier. A mound of rubble had just collapsed over the road. Velasquez looked round, laughed, and carried on walking.

The soldier they had saved was a Private Davis, who seemed slightly shell-shocked but otherwise unharmed. He would shout things like "Take cover!" whenever he saw a banshee flying overhead. The squad soon got used to it.

"Shut the hell up Davis, you got me worried there" Joked Miller. He looked genuinely concerned, he had his rifle at his shoulder and his eyes were wide. He laughed it off, looking over his shoulder every now and then; checking his rifle stock to make sure it was loaded.

Morgan looked down at his own rifle. He had killed something today; his father was probably looking down on him, smiling. Morgan certainly wasn't, he was sure this whole invasion had happened to force him into the marines. He still felt like an economist. Heck, if there wasn't the whole "fighting for his very survival" thing he could probably have made a fair amount of money out of this mess.

"Hey sir, did you hear, apparently this is the only place the covenant touched down? Fancy that huh?" Said Kaparzow.

Yup, thought Morgan. This is all set up. And now it looks like I'm in the damn marines.

"Happy now?" Asked Morgan, head tilted back. "I killed one of the bastards, better than YOU ever did!" His voice was raised. His limbs were limp by his sides.

"Dude, you ok?" asked Davis, everyone else was trying not to laugh.

"Im fine" Morgan answered quickly. He put his left hand under his rifle and carried on marching.

#### Chapter 7: "Dead on arrival"

"GO GO GO" screamed Captain Ash. Morgan was less than a hundred yards from the rally point, and had run into heavy resistance. The squad was sat at the head of the canals and needed to rendezvous with Johnson upstream. There was one problem.

"There have to be about fifty bugs in between us and the RV sir! Are you sure you want us to engage?" Kaparzow shouted over the constant stream of white hot plasma that streaked above their heads.

"Of course I want to engage Private!" Even Captain Ash looked terrified.

Tsah Rimosck, a Red elite from the 5th holy lancers, coordinated his

fire towards the head of the canal, where he knew at least four human soldiers were hiding behind a placement of fauna.

He saw a circular object fly up from this position and watched it as it landed in front of him. It rolled towards him for a moment before, hissing, it started to emit white smoke, Tsah thought this most strange, and he ordered his grunts to cease fire. Just then, he thought he heard brutes. Ah, just what we need, he thought "another bunch of hairy mindless fools to reinforce our position. We have the scarab for forerunners sake!"

Before he could cry out to greet them eight heads materialised through the smoke. They were human. These tiny warriors roared like mighty brutes as they moved down the slope and opened fire on Tsah's unit. Tsah stood as his energy shield absorbed the onslaught. The elite lifted his plasma rifle casually and squeezed the handle, the human female cried out in pain, falling helplessly to the floor. Tsah smiled.

The horde of grunts ran into the fray, one by one was mowed down mercilessly. The broken bodies began to pile up. Finally, Ghaktn Op; a grunt commander, took the initiative. He fired a volley of needles at the humans; he hit a tall male with a full clip. The needles had pierced his lungs, and he stood silent as the pink spines detonated, tearing his body to shreds. Soon after, Ghaktn found a metal ball on the ground. He brought it close to his face to examine it.

Morgan ejected his magazine, as he fumbled for another he saw a grunt blow up, taking out a few jackals. They screamed like harpies as they were sent bleeding into the canal. Morgan had to stop himself from hyperventilating, he had to get a new magazine loaded. He wiped his teary eyes, spreading gun oil over his face. The Captain Ash turned to face the squad

"FALL BACK, Hart and Kaparzow are DOWN, Miller! See what you can do! The rest of you, keep firing on that fuca!" The Captain was hit full in the face by a crackling green ball of plasma. He collapsed backwards, his outstretched arm flopping down. Morgan looked at him as he hit the dust, but all he saw was a black, smoking mess for a face. His eyes were pure white and seemed to stare right at him, Morgan vomited in-between his legs. He looked up and saw Davis crying in the smoke. A blue ball, similar to the one he saw at Icono corp. curved its way through the fog. He realised that it was far smaller, only ten centimetres wide at most. It was falling towards Davis. Morgan began to cry out in terror and warning, but it was too late. The sphere landed on his chest and didn't bounce off. Davis went to throw it back. His hand was stuck to the grenade. Davis looked directly at Morgan "what colour he still had left drained from his face.

"MOMMY!" Yelled Davis before he was enveloped in blue light. When the orb of plasma receded Davis was gone. His body had been vaporised. Black smoke washed over Morgan, he held his breath "he thought it respectful not to inhale any of his former allies.

Morgan sat in a pool of blood and vomit. He knew four of his squad were dead, maybe more. His armour felt heavy, he ran his hand down his gun and a feeling of anger grew inside of him. Had had enough of war. He would end it now. Morgan stood up, and locked his rifle.

He walked through the smoke, finger pulling back hard on the trigger. He opened his mouth wide, and an inhuman shriek escaped his lungs.

Tsah looked back and felt doubtful, there were only ten of his grunts left, and sorrier still only two jackals. But then again his platoon had taken out at least four humans â€“ a fine effort. He laughed as he saw a single human walk steadily through the smoke. His HUD told him that his shields were getting lower; the little bastard was firing at him. Once again he lifted his rifle.

His shields burst. They had run dry. Tsah was dazed for a few seconds; he could feel his body being pummelled with pointed shards of metal. Each one felt like a poison needle, corrupting his body. He knew he could no-longer face the great journey. He was not worthy. He raised his arm towards the sky, and screamed with his dying breath

"ON THE BLOOD OF OUR FATHERS, ON THE BLOOD OF OUR SONS, WE SWEAR TO UPHOLD THE COVENANT, EVEN TO OUR DYING BREATH!" Tsah could not speak. His eyes told him he was falling, but he did not feel a thing, as he lay motionless on the ground his vision slowly went dark. He saw the scarab in the canals ahead, it was dying. The last thing Tsah saw was a green figure stepping off of the magnificent machine, now destroyed. He cursed the humans, he cursed them all.

#### Chapter 7: "The green giant"

Morgan collapsed on the ground in front of the remains of the covenant unit. A grunt walked up to him and poked him with his glowing plasma pistol. Morgan grunted. He heard machine gun fire and spent cartridges hammering the ground. He heard nothing. Morgan looked up, and saw a dead grunt was lying inches from his face. Morgan yelped and pounced backwards onto his back. Miller appeared by his shoulder.

"You ok Fischer?" Miller moved his index finger left and right in front of Morgan's face. Morgan's eyes happily followed. Velazquez knelt down beside him.

"I'm great; I think I just killed an elite!" Morgan said excitedly. This was not like him. He technically abhorred violence â€“ his ID said he was a Buddhist. He thought he could hear his father laughing; now he really was going insane. Morgan turned around and looked over to the wreck of the Scarab in the canals ahead; he was amazed to see the armoured man from the dropship appear through the smoke from his smoke grenade,

"Oh my god It's a Mark IV!" Squealed Jennings. Just as he ran to greet him, Morgan heard a loud whooshing noise. He looked up to see that a Pelican was setting down nearby. The smoke was dispersed by the downdraft, and he heard the pelican's loudspeaker activate in a burst of static.

"That's right you mothas, RUN!" It was the gravely voice of the soldier standing in the pelican's cockpit.

Velasquez helped a weary Morgan up, putting his head underneath Morgan's arm. Morgan looked up, and saw a UNSC command ship looming over the city. He could almost cry with relief.

"Roger that" The loudspeaker blared. "Alright marines, Wrap it up and get yo' asses in here" The green man lifted Morgan from Velasquez' grip and threw him onto his shoulder.

"Get in the dropship" The man ordered. Velasquez quickly ran around to the rear of the pelican and stepped aboard. Jennings stood in awe at the eight foot soldier, before backing away into the awaiting ship. The green giant walked slowly around the hovering vehicle and climbed in, he was greeted by the soldier on the loud speaker.

"Who are you?" Morgan spluttered, his face rubbing against the giant's cold body armour. The giant set him down.

"This here is the Master Chief, and he probably saved your sorry ass fifty times today. And in case you were wondering, I'm Sergeant Johnson, but you can call me widowmaker" Answered the man on the loudspeaker.

The pelican ascended quickly, forcing Morgan and Johnson to take a seat. The Master Chief remained still, arms by his side. Suddenly, the mouth of the dropship closed, temporarily plunging the crew into darkness before a red light flickered on. Morgan heard a voice over the radio:

"Green light, green light to engage!" His tone sounded desperate and final.

"You heard the admiral, strap up boys, we're headed for slipspace" Said Johnson. He had a twinkle in his eye as he clicked his lap belt into position. Morgan sat down and closed his eyes. The pelican travelled vertically, slowing down before a welcome clunking was heard above the roar of the repulsors; they were docked.

The slipspace-rip was high above the city, and entering the gash was the covenant cruiser. The mothership steadily moved forward. The nose of the ship dipped into the shimmering portal as the UNSC vessel "In Amber Clad" accelerated towards it. The human vessel rocketed along the length of the cruiser before smashing into the crackling halo of light. Engines flared and the covenant mothership heaved itself too into slipspace.

The ring of crackling electrons collapsed into a singularity. This singular dot shone throughout New Mombasa for a millisecond, before expanding outwards. A pure white wall of energy bore down on the city, expanding outwards at two hundred miles per hour. It spread along the freeway, the resultant gale of wind picking up cars, trucks, only to be vaporized by the following wave of heat.

All was consumed. Nothing was spared.

Morgan opened his eyes, the holo-monitor had turned on, and apparently showed a view of what lay ahead of them. The entire deck gasped in awe, before descending into hushed whispers. Morgan saw on his screen a colossal ring structure floating in space. The mouth of the dropship opened, and the crew stepped out. The same image was projected onto the wall of the hangar. Jennings was frozen.

"What the hell is that thing?" inquired Morgan, a look of dread upon his face.

"That's Halo," said Master Chief. "I blew one up once."

"Oh, right," replied Morgan. "Soâ€¦ what is it again?"

\*\*END\*\*

To the Ends of the EarthDavid Marsh © 2006.

End  
file.